

Module 5:

How we think and feel



This module will explain:

- how our thoughts and feelings affect each other
- the difference between situations, thoughts and feelings and
- the hot cross bun, which is a tool that will help you understand how your thoughts and feelings can produce unhelpful behaviours
- unhelpful thinking styles

Authors: Caroline O'Connor, Kevin Duffy, Caroline Brilly.

Edited by Caoimhe Black
and Brian Fitzmaurice



.....

Plan for today's session

How was your week?

What would you like to talk about today?

Evaluating today's session

Summary of what we talked about today

What will I do during the week?

How was today for me?

Name: _____ Date: _____

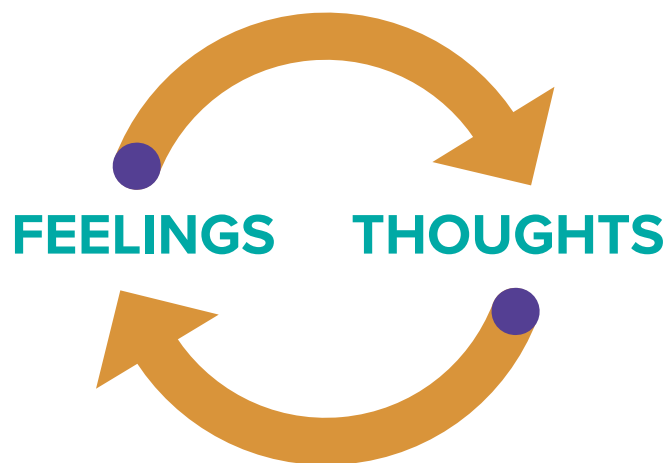


What influences how we think and feel?

Lots of things affect how we think and feel.

- Our early experiences as a child
- Events in our lives
- Stress
- Our moods and feelings

Our thoughts and feelings also affect each other, like this:



We often believe that our feelings and emotions are determined by what happens outside of us and by how other people behave. We may say or think things like this.

- My partner made me so angry.
- My boss made me so nervous.
- This trip made me feel so relaxed.
- I'm depressed because I didn't get the job I wanted.

When we make statements like these, we are saying that someone or something other than ourselves made us feel the way we feel.

But if four different people are in the same situation, they will all feel and experience that situation in different ways.

This means that a situation can trigger us to have certain thoughts and emotions, but it is not the situation that determines how we respond. How we think or how we interpret the situation determines how we respond. And how we think or interpret things is influenced by our past experiences and our ways of viewing the world.

.....

This is why it is helpful to understand how our thoughts, feelings, behaviour and bodies affect each other.



Our thoughts and beliefs about an event define our emotional responses. So we need to remember that thoughts are not facts. They are just interpretations of what is going on.

Thoughts are not facts: a story

Gemma went to a small party. The host introduced her to Mike. Gemma chatted to Mike, but as they talked Gemma started getting upset. She noticed that Mike was not looking at her. He kept looking around the room.

Gemma had done this coping skills course, and she realised that she could have many different thoughts in response to Mike's behaviour. These are some of the thoughts she came up with.

- This man is so rude! He won't even look at me while I'm talking with him! What an insult!
- Mike must think I'm really unattractive and uninteresting. I must be a really boring person. Nobody wants to talk to me.
- Mike is probably waiting for a friend to come. Maybe he's getting anxious.

Activity: Use the worksheet **How do my thoughts make me feel?** Put yourself in Gemma's shoes and identify the feelings associated with these thoughts.

Gemma realised she would feel very different emotions depending on which thought she decided was right. Because her emotions were so different depending on what she was thinking, she realised that she couldn't say what was actually true.

How do my thoughts make me feel?

Imagine you are Gemma. Here are the thoughts she had at the party. Circle the feeling that you would associate with the thought. Choose the one closest to what you would feel.

Thought	How it makes me feel (Circle one option for each thought.)			
This man is so rude! He won't even look at me while I'm talking with him! What an insult!	Irritated	Sad	Nervous	Caring
Mike must think I'm really unattractive and uninteresting. I must be a really boring person. Nobody wants to talk to me.	Irritated	Sad	Nervous	Caring
Mike is probably waiting for a friend to come. Maybe he's getting anxious.	Irritated	Sad	Nervous	Caring

Telling the difference between situations, feelings and thoughts.⁹ Page 1 of 2

Worksheet

See if you can tell the difference between a situation, feeling and thought. Look at each option and tick the one you think it is. The first one has been done for you.

	Situation	Feeling	Thought
Nervous		✓	
See a man behind me			
At home			
I'm not going to be able to do this			
Sad			
Talking to a friend			
Irritated			
Driving my car			
I'm always going to feel this way			
At work			
I'm going crazy			
Angry			
I'm no good			
4.00 pm			
Something terrible is going to happen			
Nothing ever goes right			
I'm out of control			
Talking on the phone			
She's being inconsiderate			



⁹ The material in this section is from **Mind Over Mood**, by D Greenberger and CA Padesky. It was published in 1995 by Guilford Press in New York.

Telling the difference between situations, feelings and thoughts. Page 2 of 2

Worksheet

	Situation	Feeling	Thought
Depressed			
I'm a loser			
Scared			
Guilty			
At my son's house			
I'm having a heart attack			
I've been taken advantage of			
Lying in bed trying to go to sleep			
This isn't going to work out			
Shame			
Anxiety			
I'm going to lose everything I've got			
Panic			
Discouraged			
I'll never get over this			
Sitting in a restaurant			
Nobody will understand me			

Using a 'hot cross bun' to think about your situation¹⁰

Have you ever eaten a hot cross bun? It's divided into four parts.

When we think about our **situation**, we need to think about four things.

- Body
- Thoughts
- Behaviour
- Feelings

We can put these four things into a hot cross bun to help us see how things relate to each other.

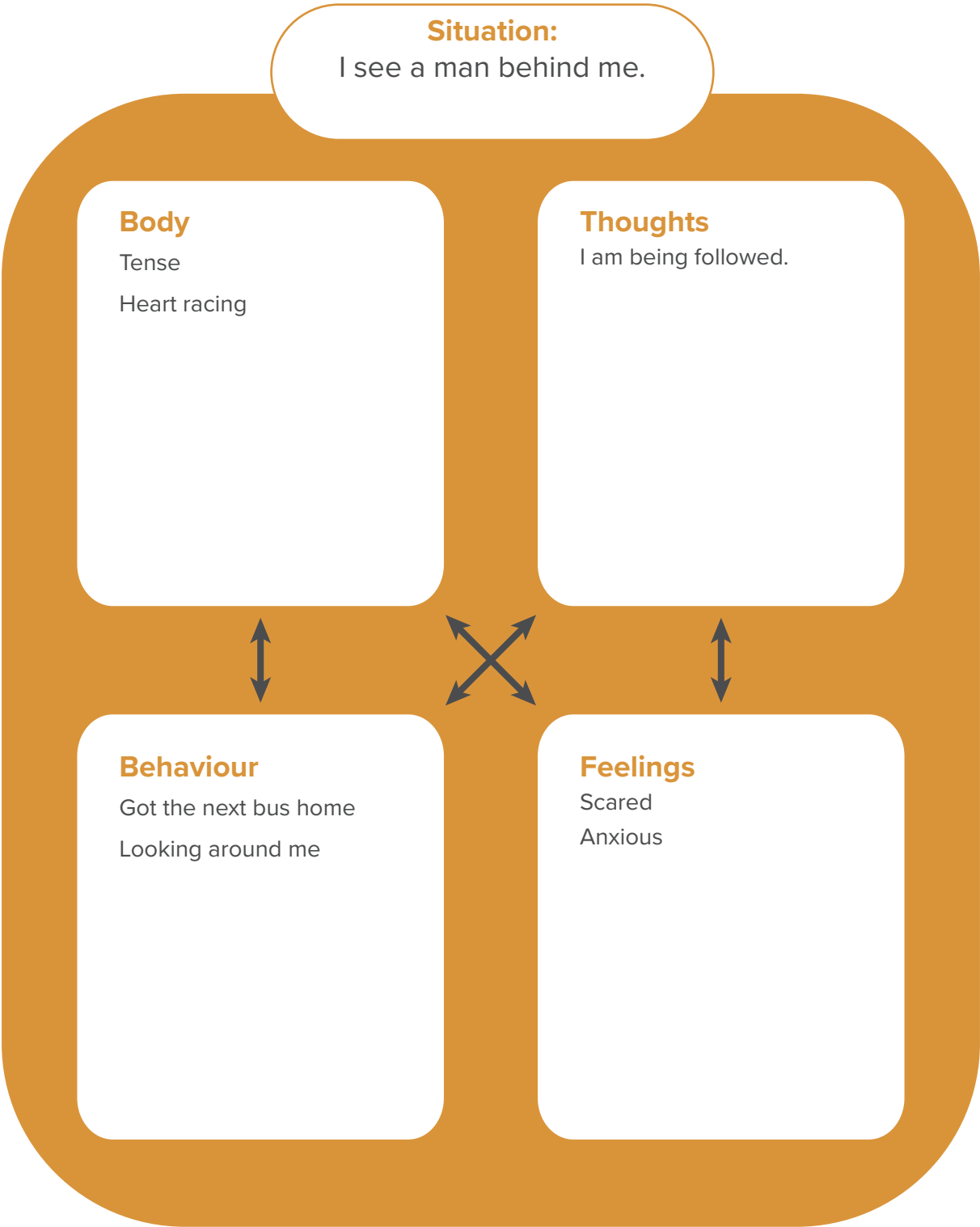


• • •

¹⁰ The original hot cross bun diagram is from <https://psychologytools.com/>.

Using a 'hot cross bun' to think about your situation

Here is a hot cross bun for the situation 'I see a man behind me'.



Here is a hot cross bun for this situation, but it includes helpful thoughts and behaviours.

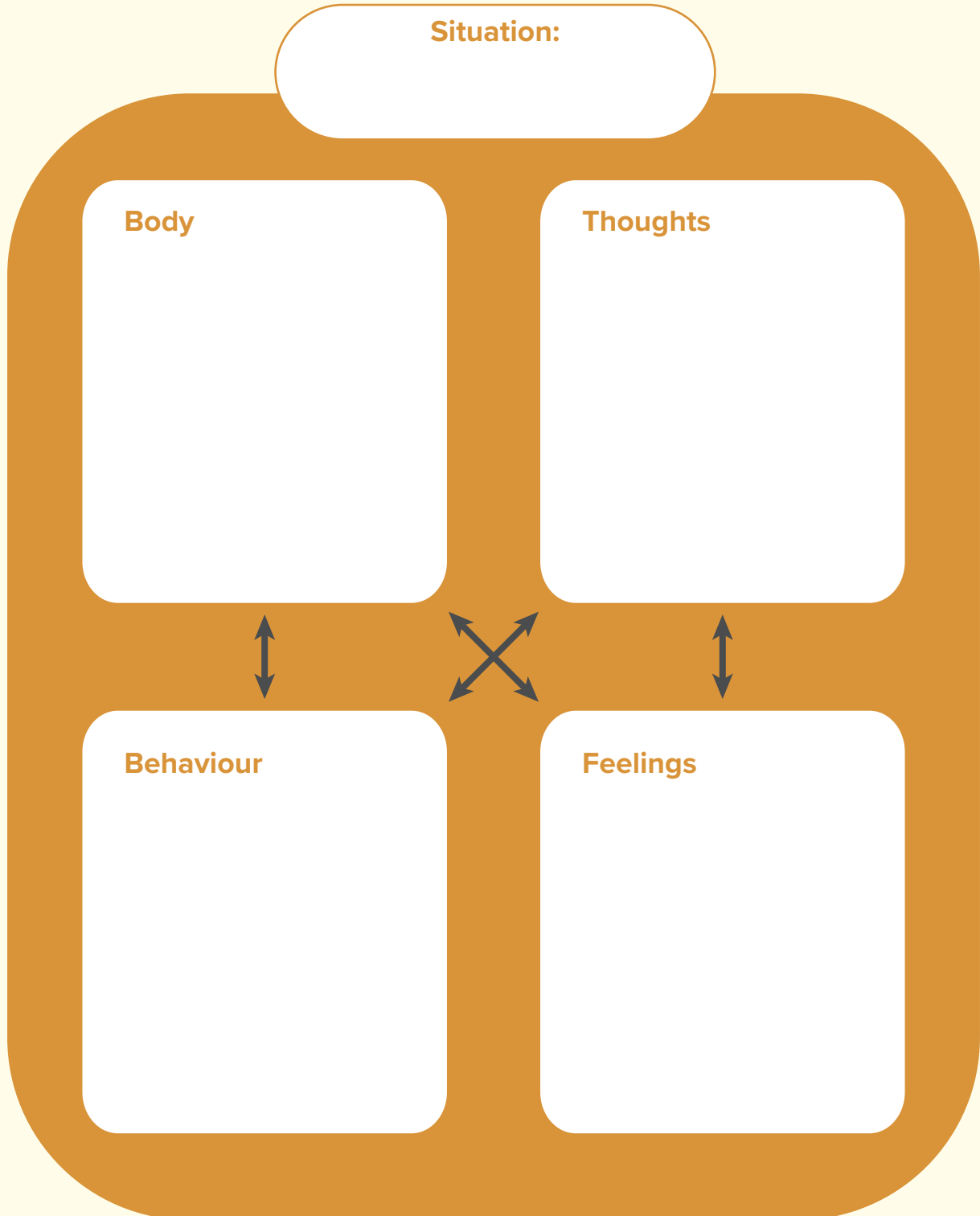
 **Worksheet**



My hot cross bun on a bad day

Worksheet

Think of a situation on a **bad day** and put it in a hot cross bun.



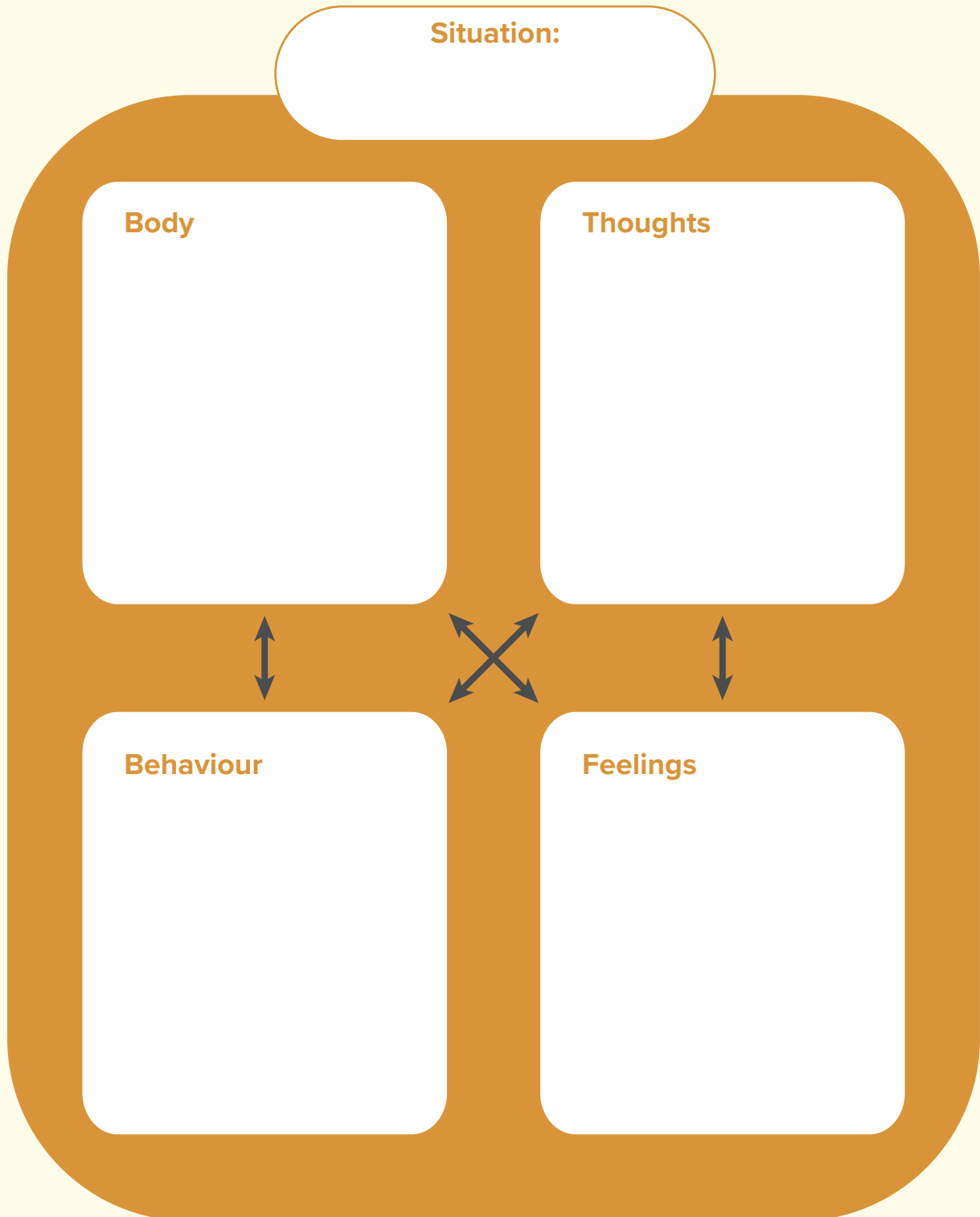
The diagram is a large orange rounded square representing a hot cross bun. At the top center is a white rounded rectangle labeled "Situation:". Below this are four white rounded rectangles arranged in a 2x2 grid, labeled "Body" (top-left), "Thoughts" (top-right), "Behaviour" (bottom-left), and "Feelings" (bottom-right). Double-headed arrows connect the "Body" and "Behaviour" boxes vertically, the "Thoughts" and "Feelings" boxes vertically, and all four boxes are connected to a central point by four arrows pointing outwards in a cross pattern.

Name: _____ Date: _____

My hot cross bun on a good day

Worksheet

Now think of a situation on a **good day**. Put it into a hot cross bun.



The diagram is a large orange rounded square representing a hot cross bun. At the top is a smaller rounded rectangle labeled "Situation:". Below it are four rounded square quadrants: "Body" (top-left), "Thoughts" (top-right), "Behaviour" (bottom-left), and "Feelings" (bottom-right). In the center, there are three double-headed arrows: a vertical one between Body and Behaviour, a vertical one between Thoughts and Feelings, and a diagonal one connecting all four quadrants.

Name: _____ Date: _____

What are unhelpful thinking styles?

Unhelpful thinking is when we tell ourselves things that are negative and we don't have evidence to back them up. Unhelpful thinking is common to everyone when we are stressed. Unhelpful thinking strategies are also called biased thinking.

When we make a habit of thinking this way, it turns into our regular thinking style and we can be completely unaware we are doing it. Then unhelpful thinking styles become automatic. This can cause lots of emotional stress, which can make us mentally unwell.

Three main thinking patterns are common in psychosis.

- Paranoid thinking
- Jumping to conclusions
- Emotional reasoning

Within these patterns, there are lots of thinking styles.

The table on the next page shows the most common unhelpful thinking styles.

Unhelpful Thinking Style	Description
All or nothing thinking	<p>Also called black and white thinking.</p> <p>We think there is no middle ground. If it isn't perfect, it's failure.</p> <p>"I didn't get an A. I'm such a failure."</p>
Over generalising	<p>We see a pattern based on a single event and draw conclusions.</p> <p>"I forgot to return my mother's phone call. I'm a bad son, and she doesn't want me."</p>
Mental filter	<p>We only notice certain evidence and ignore the rest</p> <p>"It doesn't matter that I got a B. I'm such a failure."</p>
Ignoring the positive	<p>We say that things don't count for some reason</p> <p>"It doesn't matter that I went for a walk today. I did it at the wrong time."</p>
Jumping to conclusions	<p>We mind read, imagining we know what other people are thinking.</p> <p>We fortune tell and behave as if we can predict the future.</p>
Magnification or catastrophising	<p>We blow things out of proportion or make them seem less important.</p> <p>"I missed his birthday. He'll never speak to me again."</p>
Emotional reasoning	<p>We assume that something must be true because we feel a certain way.</p> <p>"I'm embarrassed. I'm so stupid."</p>
Over criticising	<p>We use words like "should" and "must" and make ourselves feel guilty or like failures.</p> <p>"I should go jogging twice a week. I'm so lazy. No wonder I can't lose weight."</p>
Labelling	<p>We put labels on ourselves or others</p> <p>"I'm useless." "He's an idiot."</p>
Personalising things	<p>We blame ourselves or take responsibility for something that isn't our fault. Or we blame others for something that isn't their fault.</p>

Ask yourself if you might have one of these thinking styles and if it helps you, or sometimes holds you back.